
NATIONAL CONVENTION.

REPORT UPON THE PRINCIPLES

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POLITICAL MORALITY

WHICH ARE TO FORM THE BASIS OF THE ADMINISTRATION

OF THE INTERIOR CONCERNS OF THE REPUBLIC.

MADE IN THE NAME OF THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY,

THE 18th PLUVIOSE, SECOND YEAR OF THE REPUBLIC,

[FEBRUARY 6th, 1794,]

By MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE. K

[Translated from a copy printed by order of the CONVENTION.]

PRINTED AND SOLD AT N^o. 112, MARKET-STREET,
PHILADELPHIA, M DCC XCIV.

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THE BASIS OF THE ADMINISTRATION

OF THE INTERIOR CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC

MADE IN THE NAME OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC SAFETY



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BY MAXIMILIAN ROBESPIERRE

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NATIONAL CONVENTION.

R E P O R T

on the principles of political morality which are to form the basis of the administration of the interior concerns of the Republic, made in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, the 18th Pluviose, second year of the Republic [Feb. 6, 1794].

By MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE.

[Translated from a Copy printed by order of the Convention].

Citizens, Representatives of the People,

SOME time since we laid before you the principles of our exterior political system, we now come to develop the principles of political morality which are to govern the interior. After having long pursued the path which chance pointed out, carried away in a manner by the efforts of contending factions, the Representatives of the People at length acquired a character and produced a form of government. A sudden change in the success of the nation announced to Europe the regeneration which was operated in the national representation. But to this point of time, even now that I address you, it must be allowed that we have been impelled thro' the tempest of a revolution, rather by a love of right and a feeling of the wants of our country, than by an exact theory, and precise rules of conduct, which we had not even leisure to sketch.

It is time to designate clearly the purposes of the revolution and the point which we wish to attain: It is time we should examine ourselves the obstacles which yet are between us and our wishes, and the

means most proper to realize them : A consideration simple and important which appears not yet to have been contemplated. Indeed, how could a base and corrupt government have dared to view themselves in the mirror of political rectitude? A king, a proud senate, a Cæsar, a Cromwell ; of these the first care was to cover their dark designs under the cloak of religion, to covenant with every vice, caress every party, destroy that of men of probity, oppress and deceive the people in order to attain the end of their perfidious ambition. If we had not had a task of the first magnitude to accomplish ; if all our concern had been to raise a party or create a new aristocracy, we might have believed, as certain writers more ignorant than wicked asserted, that the plan of the French revolution was to be found written in the works of Tacitus and of Machiavel, and seek for the duties of the representatives of the people in the history of Augustus, of Tiberius, or of Vespasien, or even in that of certain French legislators ; for tyrants are substantially alike and only differ by trifling shades of perfidy and cruelty.

For our part we now come to make the whole world partake in your political secrets, in order that all friends of their country may rally at the voice of reason and public interest, and that the French nation and her representatives be respected in all countries which may attain a knowledge of their true principles ; and that intriguers who always seek to supplant other intriguers may be judged by public opinion upon settled and plain principles.

Every precaution must early be used to place the interests of freedom in the hands of truth, which is eternal, rather than in those of men who change ; so that if the government forgets the interests of the people or falls into the hands of men corrupted, according to the natural course of things, the light of

known principles should unmask their treacheries, and that every new faction may read its death in the very thought of a crime.

Happy the people that attains this end; for, whatever new machinations are plotted against their liberties, what resources does not public reason present when guaranteeing freedom!

What is the end of our revolution? The tranquil enjoyment of liberty and equality; the reign of that eternal justice, the laws of which are graven, not on marble or stone, but in the hearts of men, even in the heart of the slave who has forgotten them, and in that of the tyrant who disowns them.

We wish that order of things where all the low and cruel passions are enchained, all the beneficent and generous passions awakened by the laws; where ambition subsists in a desire to deserve glory and serve the country; where distinctions grow out of the system of equality, where the citizen submits to the authority of the magistrate, the magistrate obeys that of the people, and the people are governed by a love of justice; where the country secures the comfort of each individual, and where each individual prides himself on the prosperity and glory of his country; where every soul expands by a free communication of republican sentiments, and by the necessity of deserving the esteem of a great people; where the arts serve to embellish that liberty which gives them value and support, and commerce is a source of public wealth and not merely of immense riches to a few individuals.

We wish in our country that morality may be substituted for egotism, probity for false honour, principles for usages, duties for good manners, the empire of reason for the tyranny of fashion, a contempt for vice instead of a contempt for misfortune, pride for insolence, magnanimity for vanity, the love of glory

for the love of money, good people for good company, merit for intrigue, genius for wit, truth for dissimulation, the attractions of happiness for the ennobling of sensuality, the grandeur of man for the littleness of the great, a people magnanimous, powerful, happy for a people amiable, frivolous and miserable; in a word, all the virtues and miracles of a Republic, instead of all the vices and absurdities of a Monarchy.

We wish, in a word, to fulfil the intentions of nature and the destiny of man, realize the promises of philosophy, and acquit providence of a long reign of crime and tyranny. That France, once illustrious among enslaved nations, may, by eclipsing the glory of all free countries that ever existed, become a model to nations, a terror to oppressors, a consolation to the oppressed, an ornament of the universe, and that, by sealing the work with our blood, we may at least witness the dawn of the bright day of universal happiness. This is our ambition,—this is the end of our efforts.

What kind of government can realize these prodigies? A democratic or republican government only. These two terms are synonymous notwithstanding the abuse of common language; for aristocracy is no more republic than monarchy is. A democracy is not where the people always assembled, regulate themselves public affairs, much less is it where one hundred thousand portions of the people, by measures insulated, precipitate and contradictory, should decide the fate of the whole nation: Such a government has never existed except to bring back the people under the yoke of despotism.

A democratic government is that in which the sovereign people, guided by laws of their own enacting, do themselves all that they can do well, and by means of delegates all which they cannot do themselves. It is therefore in the principles of a democratic

government that you are to seek the rules of your political conduct.

But, in order to found and consolidate among us democracy, to reach the peaceful reign of constitutional laws, we must terminate the war of liberty against tyranny, and weather successfully the tempests of the revolution: This is the end of the revolutionary government you have framed. You should therefore let regulate your conduct by the tempestuous circumstances in which the republic exists, and the plan of your administration should be the result of the spirit of the revolutionary government combined with the general principles of democracy.

And what is the fundamental principle of a democratic or popular government, I mean, what is the primary spring which supports and gives it motion? It is virtue; I speak of public virtue, that which produced so many prodigies in Greece and Rome, and which ought to produce prodigies yet more wonderful in republican France; of that virtue which is nothing else than a love of country and of its laws.

But as equality is the essence of republicanism or democracy, it follows, that the love of country necessarily includes the love of equality.

Again, it is true that this sublime passion supposes a preference of the public interest over all private considerations; whence there results that the love of country supposes or produces all virtues: for what are they but a strength of mind which commands such sacrifices? and how could the slave of avarice and ambition, for example, immolate his idol to his country's weal.

Not only virtue is the soul of democracy, but it can exist in no other government. In a monarchy I know but one individual who can love his country, and who for this indeed needs no virtue; it is the monarch. The reason is, that of all the inhabitants

of his dominions the monarch alone has a country.— Is he not sovereign at least in fact? Does he not assume the prerogative of the people? And what is our country but where we are citizens and partake in the sovereignty?

By a natural consequence of this principle, in aristocratical governments the word *patrie* (country) means nothing for any but the *patrician* families who usurp the sovereignty.

It is only in democracies that all citizens find truly a country, and where that country can reckon as many zealous defenders of its cause as there are citizens. This is the source of the superiority of free people over all others. If Athens and Sparta triumphed over the tyrants of Asia, and the Swiss over the tyrants of Spain and Austria, this is the only cause.

But the French are the first people in the world that have established democracy in its purity, by holding out to all men equality and a full enjoyment of the rights of the citizen; and this is, in my opinion, the true reason why all the tyrants leagued against the republic will be vanquished.

From this time great conclusions are to be drawn from the principles we have just laid down.

Since virtue and equality are the soul of the republic, and that your aim is to found, to consolidate the republic, it follows, that the first rule of your political conduct should be, to let all your measures tend to maintain equality and encourage virtue; for the first care of the legislator should be to strengthen the principles on which the government rests. Hence all that tends to excite a love of country, to purify manners, to exalt the mind, to direct the passions of the human heart towards the public good, you should adopt and establish. All that tends to center and debase them into selfish

otism, to awaken an infatuation for littlenesses, and disregard for greatness, you should reject or repress. the system of the French revolution that which is amoral is impolitic, and what tends to corrupt is counter-revolutionary. Weaknesses, vices, prejudices are the road to monarchy. Carried away, too often perhaps, by the force of ancient habits, as well as by the innate imperfection of human nature, to false ideas and pusillanimous sentiments, we have more to fear from the excesses of weakness, than from excesses of energy. The warmth of zeal is not perhaps the most dangerous rock that we have to avoid; but rather that languor which ease produces and a distrust of our own courage. Therefore continually wind up the sacred spring of republican government, instead of letting it run down. I need not say that I am not here justifying any excess. Principles the most sacred may be abused; the wisdom of government should guide its operations according to circumstances, it should time its measures, chuse its means; for the manner of bringing about great things is an essential part of the talent of producing them, just as wisdom is an essential attribute of virtue.

We do not pretend to model the French Republic after that of Sparta; we neither wish to give it the austere manners nor the corruption of cloisters. We have just laid before you the moral and political principle of a popular government. You have then a compass to direct you in every tempest of the passions, and through the whirlwind of intrigues which surrounds you. You have the touch-stone which you can apply to all your laws and every proposition laid before you. By comparing them always with that principle you may henceforth avoid the rock on which large assemblies usually split, the danger of precipitate, incoherent and contradictory measures. You can give to all your measures the systematic uni-

ty, the wisdom and dignity which should characterize the representatives of the first people upon earth.

It is not necessary to detail the natural consequences of the principle of democracy, it is the principle itself, simple yet copious which deserves to be developed.

Republican virtue may be considered as it respects the people and as it respects the government: It is necessary in both. When however, the government alone wants it, there exists a resource in that of the people; but when the people themselves are corrupted liberty is already lost.

Happily virtue is natural in the people, in despite of aristocratical prejudices. A nation is truly corrupted when, after having, by degrees, lost its character and liberty, it slides from democracy into aristocracy or monarchy; this is the death of the political body in decrepitude. When, after four hundred years of glory, avarice had at length driven from Sparta the manners with the laws of Lycurgus, Agis died in vain to restore them. Demosthenes in vain thundered eloquence against Philip, Philip found in the vices of degenerated Athens advocates more eloquent than Demosthenes. There is yet in Athens as great a population as in the time of Miltiades and Aristides but there are no more Athenians. What avails that Brutus killed the tyrant? Tyranny yet lives in every heart, and Rome only lives in the name of Brutus.

But, when, by prodigious efforts of courage and reason, a whole people break asunder the fetters of despotism to make of the fragments trophies to liberty when, by their innate vigor, they rise, in a manner from the arms of death, to resume all the strength of youth; when, in turns forgiving and inexorable, intrepid and docile, they can neither be checked by impregnable ramparts, nor by innumerable armies of tyrants leagued against them, and yet of themselves

op at the voice of the law; if then they do not reach the height of their destiny it can only be the fault of those who govern.

Again, it may be said, that to love justice and equality the people need no great effort of virtue; it is sufficient that they love themselves.

But the magistrate is obliged to sacrifice his interest to that of the people, and the pride of office to equality. The law must speak with all its energy, especially to the organs of it. The power of the government must be felt by its agents to keep all parts of it in harmony with the law. If there is a representative body, a primary authority, constituted by the people, it is the duty of that body to superintend and repress continually all public functionaries. But what will keep *it* within proper bounds unless its own virtue? The more exalted this source of public order is, the more pure it ought to be: Then it is necessary that the representative body should begin by repressing in its bosom all private passions and interests, and listen only to the voice of public good. Happy the representatives, when their glory and even their interest attaches them, as much as a sense of their duty, to the cause of liberty.

Let us deduce from all this one important truth; that the character of a popular government is, to place all confidence in the people and be rigorous to itself.

Here would the development of our theory stop, if you had only to pilot the vessel of the republic in fair weather; but the tempest howls; and the revolutionary state in which we now are imposes another task.

This severe purity of the principles of the French Revolution, the sublimity indeed of its object, are what constitute our strength and our weakness; our strength as it gives us the ascendancy which truth

will command over imposture, and the rights of the public interest over private interest,—our weakness because it gives scope to the machinations of bad men, of all those who in their hearts meditated the plunder of the people, and all those who wished that their former plunderings should go unpunished, of all those who have abhorred liberty as a personal calamity, and those who have attached themselves to the revolution as to a trade and to the republic as to rich prey: Hence the defection of so many ambitious and avaricious persons, who started with us in the revolution, but left us on the road, because they had not undertaken the journey to arrive at the same goal. It would appear as if the two opposite geniuses who have been imagined as disputing with each other for the empire of nature, are combating at this great epocha of the human history, to fix irrevocably the destiny of the world, and that France is the theatre of this important contest. Externally all despots surround you; internally all the friends of tyranny conspire: they will conspire until crime is deprived of all hope. It is necessary to annihilate both the internal and external enemies of the republic or perish with its fall;—then, in this situation, your first political maxim should be, that the people are guided by reason, the enemies of the people driven by terror alone.

If virtue be the spring of a popular government in times of peace, the spring of that government during a revolution is virtue combined with terror: virtue without which terror is destructive; terror, without which virtue is impotent. Terror is only justice prompt, severe and inflexible; it is then an emanation of virtue; it is less a distinct principle than a natural consequence of the general principle of democracy, applied to the most pressing wants of the country.

It has been said that terror is the spring of despotic government. Does yours then resemble despotism? Is, as the steel that glistens in the hands of the heroes of liberty resembles the sword with which the satellites of tyranny are armed. Let the despot govern by terror his debased subjects; he is right as a despot: conquer by terror the enemies of liberty and you will be right as founders of the republic. The government in a revolution is the despotism of liberty against tyranny. Is force only intended to protect crime? Is not the lightning of heaven made to blast vice exalted?

The law of self preservation, with every being whether physical or moral, is the first law of nature. Crime butchers innocence to secure a throne, and innocence struggles with all its might against the attempts of crime. If tyranny reigned one single day not a patriot would survive it. How long yet will the madness of despots be called justice, and the justice of the people barbarity or rebellion?—How tenderly oppressors and how severely the oppressed are treated! Nothing more natural: whoever does not abhor crime cannot love virtue. Yet one or the other must be crushed. Let mercy be shewn the royalists, exclaim some men. Pardon the villains! No: be merciful to innocence, pardon the unfortunate, shew compassion for human weakness.

The protection of government is only due to peaceable citizens; and all citizens in the republic are republicans. The royalists, the conspirators are strangers, or rather enemies. Is not this dreadful contest, which liberty maintains against tyranny, indivisible? Are not the internal enemies the allies of those in the exterior? The assassins who lay waste the interior; the intriguers who purchase the consciences of the delegates of the people; the traitors

who sell them; the mercenary libellists paid to dishonor the cause of the people, to smother public virtue, to fan the flame of civil discord, and bring about a political counter revolution by means of a moral one; all these men, are they less culpable or less dangerous than the tyrants whom they serve? All those who interpose their parricidial lenity between these villains and the avenging sword of national justice, are as culpable as those who would throw themselves between the satellites of tyrants and bayonets of our soldiers, all the transports of their false sensibility appear to me nothing but sighs for the success of England and Austria.

But for whom should they shew their sensibility? Should they feel for 200,000 heroes, the flower of the nation, mowed down by the sword of the enemies of liberty, or destroyed by the dagger of royalist or federalist assassins? Oh no, they were merely plebeians,—patriots. To have a right to their affectionate regard, it is necessary to have been at least the widow of a general who has twenty times betrayed his country; he who wishes to attract their attention, must almost prove that he has been the death of 10,000 Frenchmen; as a Roman general, of old, if I recollect right, to obtain a triumph was obliged to shew that he had killed 10,000 enemies. A narrative of the massacres committed by the tyrants on the defenders of liberty is heard with sang-froid; our women barbarously mutilated, our children murdered on the bosom of their mothers; our prisoners, expiating in the most cruel torments sublime and astonishing acts of heroism: and the tardy punishment of some monsters, fattened on the purest blood of their country, is called a horrid butchery.

The misery of female citizens, who have generously sacrificed their brothers, children, husbands in the best of causes, is patiently heard of: but the

ives of conspirators receive those attentions which ought exclusively to be bestowed on the former.—These it is notorious can with impunity bias justice, lead against liberty the cause of their relations and their accomplices: They have been set up, in a manner, as a privileged corporation, and quartered on the public.

What weakness we yet shew in being duped by words! How aristocracy and moderantism govern us by the dangerous maxims with which they have misled us!

Aristocracy defends itself by intrigue better than patriotism by its services. The revolution is attempted to be carried on with cavils, as business in a court of justice is conducted. Conspiracies against the public are treated as the law-suits of private persons. Tyranny kills and liberty pleads; and the code framed by the conspirators is the law by which they are judged.

When the public safety is at stake, the testimony of the universe is not admitted to supply the place of personal evidence, nor presumptive proof admitted when positive cannot be adduced.

Delays in giving sentence produce the effect of impunity, the uncertainty of punishment encourages crimes: and yet the severity of punishment is complained of, the confinement of the enemies of the republic is cried up as a grievance. Precedents are looked for in the history of tyrants, and that of the people lies neglected, neither are they drawn from the nature and imperiousness of circumstances when liberty is menaced. In Rome when the consul detected the conspiracy, and smothered it at the same time by the death of the accomplices of Catalina, he was accused of having violated accustomed forms; But by whom? By the ambitious Cesar, who wished to swell his party with the horde of conspirators, by the

Pisos, the Clodiuses, and all those bad citizens, who themselves dreaded the virtue of a true Roman and severity of the laws.

To punish the oppressors of humanity is clemency; to forgive them is cruelty. The severity of tyrants has barbarity for its principle; that of a republican government is founded on beneficence. Therefore let him beware who should dare to influence the people by that terror which is made only for their enemies! Let him beware, who, regarding the inevitable errors of civism in the same light, with the premeditated crimes of perfidiousness, or the attempts of conspirators, suffers the dangerous intriguer to escape and pursues the peaceable citizen! Death to the villain who dares abuse the sacred name of liberty, or the powerful arms intended for her defence, to carry mourning or death to the patriotic heart! This abuse has existed, it is impossible to doubt it. It has no doubt been exaggerated by aristocracy: but was there in the whole republic but one virtuous citizen persecuted by the enemies of liberty, the duty of the government would be to enquire with zeal and afford him a signal vengeance.

But what conclusion is to be deduced from these persecutions which patriots have suffered through the hypocritical zeal of the counter-revolutionists, that liberty should be restored to these, and a wholesome system of severity relaxed? These new crimes of aristocracy are a proof of the necessity of that system. What do the daring attempts of our enemies prove except the too great lenity with which they have been pursued? They are caused in a great measure by the doctrine of mildness which has been lately preached to encourage them. If you could listen to such advice, your enemies would succeed in their attempts, and receive, of your own hands, the price of their last crime.

What inconsistency there would be in regarding some victories atchieved by patriotism as putting an end to all our dangers. Examine our real situation, and you will be sensible that vigilance and energy are more necessary than ever. A secret opposition logs all the operations of the government : the fatal influence of foreign courts, tho' hidden, is nevertheless active and to be feared. It is evident that crime dismayed has only covered its operations with more care and cunning.

The internal enemies of the French people are divided into two factions, which form two armies. They march under different colours, by different roads; but to the same object, the disorganization of the popular government, the overthrow of the convention, that is, the triumph of tyranny. One of these factions endeavors to make us swerve to the side of a fatal weakness, the other drives us to excesses. This wishes to transform liberty into a bacchant, that into a prostitute.

Inferior intriguers, often even good citizens misled, take one or the other side; but the chiefs of both belong to the cause of royalty or aristocracy, and co-operate against the patriots. Villains while at war with one another bear less hatred to each other than they abhor all honest men. The country is their prey; they fight to divide it: but they are leagued against those who defend it.

One faction has been called *moderates*; there is perhaps more fancy than truth in the appellation of *ultra-revolutionist*, by which the others are distinguished. This appellation which can in no wise be applied to those who with good intentions are sometimes carried beyond the bounds of the wholesome policy of the revolution, by zeal or ignorance, does not characterize those perfidious beings in the pay of tyrants, whose task it is to throw an odium on the

revolution by a false or exaggerated application of its sacred principles.

The feigned revolutionist falls perhaps oftener short of the principles of the revolution than he exceeds them: He is, however, now moderate, now revolutionary to madness, according to circumstances. In the Prussian, English, Austrian, and even Muscovite committees it is every day settled what he shall think the next day. He opposes energetic measures and executes them with exaggerated zeal when he has not been able to defeat them; Severe against innocence, but indulgent to crime: Denouncing even the guilty who are not rich enough to buy his silence, or powerful enough to deserve his services; but ever cautious not to expose himself by undertaking the cause of calumniated virtue: unveiling at times plots already discovered, and unmasking the traitors already unmasked, or even beheaded; but loud in the praise of living conspirators, who can command an influence. Ever ready to embrace the opinion of the moment, but not less attentive never to enlighten it, much less to shock it: Ever ready to adopt high toned measures, provided they have great inconveniencies attached to them; Calumniating such as only hold out advantages, or adding to them such amendments as may render them injurious; Telling truth with sparingness, just so much as to acquire a right to lie with impunity and effect: Distilling good drop by drop, but pouring out evil in a torrent: full of fire for such high sounding resolutions as mean nothing; more than indifferent for such as can do honor to the cause of the people and be beneficial to the country. Laying great stress on the outward shew of patriotism; much attached, like bigots, whom he is the professed enemy, to external appearances, he would rather wear out one hundred red caps than be guilty of a good action.

What difference is there between these and the moderates? They are servants of the same master, or, if you please, accomplices in villainy, who pretend to quarrel with each other the better to conceal their times. Judge them, not by the difference of their professions but by the identity in the result of their labours. He who attacks the convention in violent denunciations, and he that deceives to betray it, are they not agreed? He who by unjust severity obliges patriotism to tremble for its safety, makes interest to obtain a pardon for aristocracy and treachery. There were monsters who while they instigated France to attempt the conquest of the world, had no other view than to assist tyrants in the conquest of France. The hypocritical foreigner while for five years he did not cease to proclaim Paris the capital of the universe, was only translating in another jargon the anathemas of the vile federalists, who devoted Paris to destruction. To preach up atheism is only one way of absolving superstition and accusing philosophy; and war declared against the deity is only a diversion in favour of royalty.

What other means are there of combating liberty? Will the example of the first champions of aristocracy be followed,---praising the sweets of slavery and the advantages of monarchy, the supernatural genius and the incomparable virtues of kings? Will the rights of man, and the eternal principles of justice be proclaimed as empty sounds? Will nobility and priestcraft be dragged from their graves, or will the right of the high burghers to enjoy the privileges of both orders be insisted on?

No. It is more convenient to assume the mask of patriotism, to disfigure by disgraceful parodies the sublime drama of the revolution, to endanger the cause of liberty by an hypocritical moderation, or by studied extravagances.

Hence aristocracy institutes popular societies; counter-revolutionary pride conceals under rags its plumes and daggers; fanaticism overthrows its own altars; royalism chaunts the victories of the republic; nobility haunted by its recollection of lost influence, tenderly embraces equality to smother it; tyranny dyed with the blood of the defenders of liberty strews flowers on their tomb. If all hearts are not regenerated how many faces wear masks! how many traitors only meddle with our affairs to ruin them.

Do you wish to put them to the proof, requiring of them, instead of oaths and declamations, real services.

Is activity necessary, they then talk. Is deliberation proper, they wish immediately to act. Are they times peaceable they oppose every useful change. Are they tempestuous, they propose reforming everything, in order to throw all into confusion. Do you endeavor to repress the seditious, they tell you of the clemency of Cæsar. Do you wish to rescue patriots from persecution, then the firmness of Brutus is their theme; they find out that such a one belonged to the nobility, while he is serving the Republic; they forget it, is he guilty of treason. Is peace desirable, they enlarge on the advantages of victory. Is war necessary, they are eloquent of the blessings of peace. Is the territory to be defended, they are for punishing the tyrants beyond mountains and seas. Are our fortresses to be retaken they are for storming churches and scaling the sky. They forget the Austrians to make war on devotees. Is it necessary to assist our cause by securing the fidelity of our allies, they declaim against all the governments that exist, and would propose to pass a decree of accusation against the Grand Mogul himself. Do the people flock to the capitol to return thanks to the Gods for their victories, they set up

mal howlings for our past misfortunes. Are new
 evils to be culled, they spread in the midst of us
 red, divisions, persecutions and discouraging fore-
 bodings. Is it necessary to render the sovereignty
 of the people active and concentrate its strength by
 a firm and respectable government, they discover
 that the principles of the government are an infringe-
 ment on the sovereignty of the people. Are the
 rights of the people to be pleaded against the op-
 pression of government, they speak of nothing but
 respect for the laws and of the obedience due the
 constituted authorities.

They have found an admirable expedient to second
 the efforts of the republican government; that is,
 completely to disorganize and degrade it, and to
 make war on all patriots who have contributed to
 our successes.

Do you seek the means of feeding your armies, do
 you endeavour to wrest from avarice or timidity
 the provisions they hold and conceal, they very pa-
 thotically lament the public misfortunes and an-
 nounce an approaching famine. The wish of averting
 evil is with them a means of encreasing it. In
 the north fowls were killed, and a scarcity of eggs
 produced, under the pretext that fowls eat grain;—
 in the south it was proposed to destroy the mulberry
 and orange trees, under the pretext that silk is an
 article of luxury and oranges a superfluity.

Imagination cannot picture all the excesses of which
 the hypocritical counter-revolutionists have been guilt-
 y to stigmatise the cause of the revolution. Would
 you believe it, that in those parts of the republic
 where superstition had most votaries, besides accom-
 panying religious worship with all the forms that
 could render it odious, terror was spread among the
 people by giving currency to a report, that all chil-
 dren under 10 years of age and all persons above 70

were to be killed?—and that this report has been spread particularly in the ci-devant province of Brittany, and in the departments of the Rhine and Moselle? This is one of the crimes imputed to the ci-devant public accuser of the criminal tribunal of Strasburg. The tyrannical follies of this man rendered credible all that is told of Caligula and of Heliogabalus; and one can scarce believe them, though with a sight of the proofs. He carried his enormities so far as to put all women in a state of requisition for his use; it is even said, that he made use of this mode to procure a wife. Whence sprung of a sudden that swarm of foreigners, of priests, nobles and intriguers of all kinds, who at the same moment spread over the territory of the republic to execute, in the name of philosophy, the plan of a counter-revolution which could only be baffled by the energy of the public reason? Infamous plot,—worthy of the genius of the foreign courts leagued against liberty, and of the corruption of the internal enemies of the republic.

It is thus, that to the miracles constantly produced by the virtue of a great people, intrigue always unites the crimes of her perfidious treachery, crimes commanded by the tyrants, and which afterward form the subject of their ridiculous manifestoes, to keep their ignorant subjects in the abject state of slavery under which they groan.

What relation is there between liberty and the crimes of its enemies? The sun, tho' obscured by a transient cloud, is he less the great vivifying principle of nature. Does the scum which the ocean throws on its shores diminish its grandeur.

In perfidious hands all the remedies for our sufferings are rank poisons; all you can do, all you can say they will turn it against you, even the truth which we have just now developed.

They do all in their power to sew the seeds of civil war by a violent attack on all religious prejudices; they will even endeavour to turn the measures which a wholesome policy has dictated in favour of religious freedom into arms in the hands of fanaticism and aristocracy. If you had permitted the conspiracy to proceed, it would sooner or later have produced a dreadful and universal opposition to the progress of the revolution; if you check it they will endeavor to make the best of it, and will preach up that you endeavor to protect the priests and moderates.

You must not even be astonished if those priests who have most openly confessed their religious quackery should be found the authors of this system.

If the patriots, carried away by the warmth of an honest zeal, have at any time been dupes of their intrigues, they throw the blame on the patriots; for the first principle in their Machiavelian doctrine is to ruin the republic by ruining the republicans, as a country is subjugated by the destruction of the army that defends it. Hence one of their favorite maxims may be understood, which is, that the lives of men must not be regarded,—a regal maxim, which means that all friends of liberty should be put in their power.

It is to be observed, that the fate of men who seek the public good only, is to be the victims of those who consult their own interest only, which proceeds from two causes: the first, that the intriguers attack with the vices of the ancient government; the second, that the patriots only defend themselves with the virtues of the new.

This internal situation is worthy of all your attention, especially if you reflect that at the same time you have all the tyrants of Europe to combat, 1200 thousand men under arms to support, and that the government is obliged to repair continually by great energy and vigilance all the evils which the innume-

erable multitude of our enemies has prepared for us during the term of five years.

What is the remedy to all these evils? We know of no other than a development of that grand spring of the Republic—virtue.

Democracy suffers from two excesses, the aristocracy of the governors, or the contempt shewn by the people to the authorities by them constituted, which contempt makes each assemblage of persons, or each individual the centre of attraction to a portion of the public force, and brings back the people, through anarchy, to annihilation or despotism.

The endeavours of the moderates or false revolutionists is to bandy us eternally between these two rocks. But the representatives of the people can avoid them both; for the government is capable of always remaining just and wise; and when these are its characteristics it is certain of the confidence of the people.

It is very true that the aim of all our enemies is to dissolve the convention; it is true that the tyrant of Great-Britain and his allies promise their parliament and their subjects to deprive you of your energy and the public confidence which you have deserved, and that this is the first lesson taught all their agents.

But there is a political truth which should be kept in view, that a great body having the confidence of a great people can only be destroyed by its own misconduct; your enemies are convinced of this, and therefore do not doubt but they will endeavor to awaken among you all those passions which will back their evil designs.

What can they do against the national representation unless they succeed in influencing the adoption of impolitic measures which may furnish pretexts to their criminal declamations? They must therefore necessarily wish to have two kinds of agents, the one

ass endeavouring to degrade it by their calumnies; the others, who even in its bosom will strive to degrade it, to hazard the glory and interests of the republic.

To attack it with success, it was politic to begin the war against the representatives in the departments which had shewn confidence in your measures, and so against the committee of public safety; they were therefore attacked by men who appeared to disagree among themselves.

What could they undertake that would be more effectual than to paralyze the government of the convention and destroy all its springs at a time when the fate of the republic and of tyrants rested on its measures.

Far from us be the idea, that there yet exists among us a man so vile as to wish to serve the cause of tyrants! But still farther from us be the crime, which could not be forgiven us, of deceiving the National Convention and betraying the French people by guilty silence! For there is one circumstance much in favor of a free people, that truth while it is thebane of despots is the life of freemen. It is certain that there is yet one danger which our liberty has to run, the only danger perhaps to be feared: it is the plan which has existed of rallying all the enemies of the republic by bringing into action a party spirit; of persecuting all patriots, discouraging and causing the ruin of the faithful agents of the republican government, to clog its operations. It has been endeavored to deceive the convention upon persons and things; it has been misled as to the causes of the abuses which are exaggerated in order to prevent the possibility of applying a remedy; terror has been a weapon in the hands of their enemies to mislead or paralyze it; divisions are fomented; it is endeavoured particularly to create divisions among the representa-

tives sent to the departments and the committee of public safety; the first were to be induced to counteract the central authority, in order to lead to disorder and confusion; on their return it was endeavored to sour their minds, to render them the instruments of a faction. Foreigners make good use of private passions, even of misled patriotism.

At first a more direct road was intended to have been pursued, that of calumniating the committee of public safety; it was hoped they would be unable to bear the weight of their arduous duty. The victories and good fortune of the French people have been their shield. Since that time it has been attempted by praises to condemn them to inaction and destroy the fruits of their labours. All those vague declamations against the necessary agents of the committee, all the plans of disorganization disguised under the appellation of reforms, rejected by the Convention, and again brought forward now by foreign influence; the warmth with which the intrigues unmasked by the committee have been praised; the terror with which good citizens have been struck, the indulgence with which conspirators are treated, all that system of imposture and intrigue, of which the principal author is a man you expelled from among you, is aimed at the welfare of the National Convention and tends to realize the wishes of all the enemies of France.

It is since the time when that system was announced in libellous writings and was begun to be put in practice, that aristocracy and royalism have begun to raise their insolent heads, that patriotism has again been persecuted in a portion of the republic; that the national authority experienced an opposition of which intriguers began to loose the habit. Indeed if these indirect attacks had had no other inconvenience than to divide the attention and energy of

those who have borne the important burden which you have laid on them, and to draw off their attention from the important measures of public safety, in order to counteract dangerous intrigues, even then they might be considered as essentially serving the interests of our enemies.

But let us keep courage; this is the sanctuary of truth; here sit the founders of the republic, the avengers of humanity, the destroyers of tyrants.

Here to destroy an abuse it is sufficient to point it out. It is enough for us to appeal, in the name of our country, from the persuasions of self love or the weakness of individuals to the virtue and glory of the National Convention.

We call for a solemn discussion upon all the subjects of its inquietude, and on all that can impede the progress of the revolution. We intreat, that no private interest or secret motive be permitted here to usurp the place of the general will of the assembly, or the eternal power of reason.

We shall content ourselves this day with proposing that you should sanction with your formal approbation the moral and political truths on which your internal administration and the stability of the republic should be founded, as you have already sanctioned the principles of your conduct towards foreign nations: Thus you will rally all good citizens, you will deprive conspirators of all hope; you will give unity to your measures and will confound the intrigues and calumnies of kings; you will do honor to your cause and character in the eyes of all people.

Give to the French people this new pledge of your zeal in protecting patriotism, of your inflexible justice towards the guilty, and of your devotion to the cause of the people. Order that the principles of political morality which we have just developed be pro-

claimed, in your name within and without the borders of the republic.

— D E C R E E . —

The National Convention decrees, that the report of the Committee of Public Safety be printed, and to all constituted authorities, to the popular societies and the armies, and be translated into every language.

